

Vayeira

The Second Lech Lecha

From the term “מִוֶּרֶה” we can gain a perspective on contemporary events. In Parshat Vayeira, Avraham receives the second mitzvah of “Lech Lecha”. On the first occasion, he was told “Lecha Lecha” - to go on this journey from Mesopotamia to the land of Canaan. Now that he was in Canaan, the second Lecha Lecha comes:

“וְלֵךְ לְךָ אֶל אֶרֶץ הַמֹּרִיָּה”

“Make Aliya, ascend, go on that journey to the land of Moriah”

But why was it called מִוֶּרֶה? I've come across four key perushim, four great commentaries. The first is that מִוֶּרֶה comes from the root “רָאָה”, which means “to see”. And indeed, at the end of the Akedah, Avraham declared at that spot:

“בְּהָרֵי יִרְאָה”

“It is on this mountain that Hashem's presence can be seen.”

מִוֶּרֶה is the place where the presence of Hashem in this world is more palpable than in any other place.

The second perush is that מִוֶּרֶה comes from the term “מֶרֶח”, which is the biblical word for “Myrrh”, a spice which was used as part of the incense during our sacrificial rite in the temples which stood on Mount Moriah. So therefore, מִוֶּרֶה here represents the beauty and the majesty of our worship of Hashem.

And then the third and fourth perushim can be found in the Gemara Masechet Ta'anit ע"א תט"ז;

“הָר שֶׁיֵּצֵא מִמֶּנּוּ הוֹרָאָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל”

“A mountain from which teaching and instruction went forth to Israel.”

מִוֶּרֶה from “הוֹרָאָה”, which means teaching. This is the mountain from which instruction and inspiration for all times is given to the Jewish people, as indeed we declare,

“כִּי מִצִּיּוֹן תֵּצֵא תוֹרָה”

“From out of Zion comes forth the Torah”

And the last of the perushim in the Gemara there asks: Why is this mountain called מִוֶּרֶה?

“הָר שֶׁיֵּצֵא מִמֶּנּוּ מוֹרָא לְאוֹמוֹת הָעוֹלָם”

“This is a mountain from which fear and dread comes into the hearts of the nations of the world.”

מִוֶּרֶה from the root “יִרְאָה”, which means “fear”. And what Chazal mean by this is: since מִוֶּרֶה is the location where Jewish people connect with God, the place where our Temple stood, and where the words of Torah go forth for Jews around the world; because מִוֶּרֶה is the epicentre of Jewish life and of Jewish faith, sometimes that might make other people feel somewhat inadequate, and that perception might bring an element of fear into their hearts.

What we therefore find is that the term מִוֶּרֶה reminds us of the privilege that we, as Jewish people, have to be rooted geographically within the land of Israel, at the centre of which is Zion, and the blessing that comes for us throughout all ages from that most holy place on earth.

Shabbat shalom.